Patent Application of

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for

TITLE: LAMINATED LENS FOR INTRODUCING GAS-PHASE IONS INTO THE VACUUM SYSTEMS OF MASS SPECTROMETERS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is entitled to the benefits of provisional Patent Applications Ser. Nr 60/410,653 filed September 13, 2002; provisional Patent Applications Ser. Nr 60/210,877 filed June 9, 2000, now Patent Application Ser. Nr. 09/877,167 filed June 8, 2001; and provisional Patent Applications Ser. Nr 60/384,869 filed June 1, 2002, now Patent Application Ser. Nr. 10/499,147 filed May 31, 2003.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH

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SEQUENCE LISTING OR PROGRAM

Not applicable

BACKGROUND-FIELD OF INVENTION

This invention relates to laminated lenses which are used for interfacing atmospheric pressure ionization sources to mass spectrometers and ion mobility spectrometers.

BACKGROUND-DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART

Dispersive sources of ions at or near atmospheric pressure; such as, atmospheric pressure discharge ionization, chemical ionization, photoionization, or matrix assisted desorption ionization, and electrospray ionization have low sampling efficiency through conductance or transmission apertures, where less than 1% [often less than 1 ion in 10,000] of the ion current emanating from the ion source make it into the lower pressure regions of the present interfaces for mass spectrometry. Thereafter, scientists have devised several means of delivering and transferring gas-phase ions from atmospheric pressure sources into the vacuum system of mass spectrometers, such as, using lower flow sprayers to form very small droplets [referred to as nanospray], using increased heating of the aerosols to generate more ions, increasing the sampling diameter of the sampling aperture at the atmospheric-lower pressure interface, and using electrostatic, electrodynamic, or aerodynamic lens at atmospheric pressure to focus highly charged liquid jets, aerosols of droplets and ion clusters, and gas-phase ions.

Larger Entrance Aperture and Inlet Aperture Shape

Bruins (1991)[1] summarizes several means for transferring ions from an atmospheric ion source into the vacuum system of a mass spectrometer: shape of lens and orifice size. Inlet apertures in a flat disk and in the tip of a cone pointed toward the ion source are presently the preferred means of ion sampling through various aperture configurations. By increasing the diameter of the inlet aperture more ions are drawn into the aperture—the increase being related to the increase in gas conductance. However, by increasing the conductance aperture diameter, larger pumps are required to maintain the pressure in the lower pressure regions, thereby,

increasing the system and operating costs of mass spectrometers. This is also the case for ion mobility spectrometers when operated at reduced pressure.

U.S. patent 6,455,846 B1 to Prior et al (2002)[2] discloses a flared or horn inlet for introducing ions from an atmospheric ionization chamber into the vacuum chamber of a mass spectrometer. They also reported that the increase in ion current recorded in the mass spectrometer was directly proportional to the increase in the opening of the flared inlet.

Electrical and Aerodynamic Lens

Ion movement at higher pressures is not governed by the ion-optical laws used to describe the movement of ions at lower pressures. At lower pressures, the mass of the ions and the influence of inertia on their movement play a prominent role. While at higher pressures the migration of ions in an electrical field is constantly impeded by collisions with the gas molecules. In essence at atmospheric pressure there is so many collisions that the ions have no "memory" of previous collisions and the initial energy of the ion is "forgotten". Their movement is determined by the direction of the electrical field lines and the viscous flow of gases. At low viscous gas flow, the ions follow the electric field lines, while at higher viscous gas flow the movement is in the direction of the gas flow. Inventors have disclosed various means of moving ions at atmospheric pressure by shaping the electric field lines and directing the flow of gases.

Housing Lens

Inventors have proposed shaping the electrostatic field lines in front of the inlet aperture using electrodes at a substantial distance from both the sprayer and the inlet aperture. U.S patent 5,432,343 to Gulcicek et al. (1995) discloses a cylindrical electrostatic lens in the atmospheric ionization chamber at an electrostatic potential greater than the sprayer, the inl t aperture, and the end of a glass capillary coated with a metal surface that shapes the electrostatic field lines within the ionization or evaporation chamber. U.S. patents 5,559,326 to Goodley et al (1996)[3] and 5,750,988 to Apffel et al. (1998)[4] both disclose a needle electrode in front of the inlet

aperture and an electrified housing surrounding the sprayer. All of this work was for the purpose of shaping the electrostatic field lines in front of the sampling aperture to be either perpendicular to or converging onto the inlet aperture, however, these configurations require the position of the sprayer relative to the sampling aperture to be set and predetermined so as to obtain maximum ion sampling. Forcing the operator of the instrument to place the sprayer back in the original position or to reoptimize the potentials to return to the original operating conditions.

Atmospheric Pressure: Lens at Sprayer

Several types of ring or planar electrodes at the sprayer have been proposed to focus ions and charged droplets after they leave the sprayer. U.S. patent 4,531,056 to Labowsky et al. (1985)[5] discloses a perforated diaphragm used to direct the flow of a gas at an electrospray needle to aid the evaporation of highly charged droplets emanating from the needle and sweep away gas-phase solvent molecules from the area in front of the inlet aperture. In addition, the diaphragm was used to stabilize the position of the needle to direct the liquid jet through a center aperture in the diaphragm into a desolvation or ionization region.

Schneider et al. (2001, 2002)[6] discloses a ring shaped electrode incorporated near the tip of the electrospray needle which increased the detected ion signal and the stability of the signal and at the same time decreasing the dependence of the ion signal on the sprayer position.

Low Pressure: Lens at Sprayer

Similar types of electrodes have been disclosed to increase the ion signal of gas, electrospray sources operated at lower pressures—for example, in U.S. patent 4,318,028 to Perel et al. (1982)[7], Mahoney et al.[8] (1987, 1990), and Lee et al.[9] (1988, 1989). Our own patents U.S. patents 5,838,002 (1998)[10] and 6,278,111 B1 (2001)[11], and World patent 98/07505 (1998)[12] describes a concentric tube which surrounds the end of the electrospray capillary which was used to stabilize the direction of the liquid jet in order to direct the liquid jet into a heated high pressure region where the jet broke up into small droplets and where gas-phase ions and ion

clusters were formed. This approach proved feasible but it was found to difficult to control the collection and focusing of ions formed in this higher-pressure region due to the electrical breakdown of the gases.

Atmospheric Pressure Lens: Between Sprayer & Aperture; or at Aperture

Several types of ring or planar electrodes positioned between the sprayer and an inlet aperture have been proposed to focus ions and charged droplets: U.S. patents 4,300,044 to Iribane et al. (1981)[13] and 5,412,208 to Covey et al. (1995)[14] are examples of placing an electrified lens immediately in front of the inlet aperture; U.S. patent 4,542,293 to Fenn et al. (1985)[15] and U.S patent application 2003/0,038,236 to Russ et al. (2003)[16] disclose diaphragm and planar electrodes in front of a heated capillary inlet; and U.S. patent 5,747,799 to Franzen (1998)[17] discloses a ring electrode on the inside wall of a heated capillary inlet in conjunction with the shape of the aperture to entrain ions into the aperture by viscous friction. Olivares et al. (1987, 1988)[18] discloses a focusing ring located downstream of the electrospray sprayer, and U.S. patent 5,306,910 to Jarrell et al. (1994)[19] discloses a gird which is operated with an oscillating electrical potential to form gas-phase ions from highly charge droplets, while allowing the electrospray needle and entrance aperture to remain at ground potential; however, most of the droplets impact on the grid as they pass through the grid, not making it into the inlet aperture. Feng et al.[20] (2002) describes a series of annular electrodes downstream of an induction electrode used to guide charged droplets, and Alousi et al. (2002)[21] describes a lens between the electrospray needle and the entrance aperture dividing the ion source into two discrete areas—an area for the creation of highly charged droplets and gas-phase ions and a drift region leading to an increase of 2-10 fold in the signal intensity; however, most of the ion current from the sprayer was deposited on the lens.

World patent 03/010794 A2 to Forssmann et al. (2003)[22] discloses a series of annular electrodes for ion acceleration and then subsequent ion focusing in front of the inlet aperture, similar to the device described by Jarrell et al. (1994). Jarrell et al.'s device utilize an oscillatory potential while Forssmann et al.'s device utilizes a

direct current potential to first accelerate charged drops away from the electrospray needle, through an aperture in an accelerating electrode [or through an accelerating grid in Jarrell et al.'s device], and then into a focusing region. In both cases, droplets are accelerated away from an electrospray needle and travel up a potential gradient into a focusing region due their momentum. Droplets and any gas-phase ions resulting from the breakup of the droplets would more than likely impact on the accelerating electrodes due to the diverging electrostatic fields along the axis of the electrodes.

Our U.S. patent applications 09/877,167 (2001), and 10/499,147 (2003) describe perforated high transmission surfaces [both single layer and laminated] with large electrostatic potential differences across the structure [typically >10/1] for transferring ions from dispersive atmospheric ionization sources into a focusing region where the ions can be focused into a small ion beam for introduction into an inlet aperture. Nevertheless all the atmospheric lens, electrodes, grids, and perforated structures heretofore known suffer from a number of disadvantages:

(a) By using larger inlet apertures to increase the flow of ions into the vacuum system, and the necessary vacuum pumping system to maintain low pressures required for operation of the mass spectrometer, the initial and operating cost of the instrument is expensive.

(b) The lens and electrodes between the ion source and the inlet aperture in present use with small electrical potential differences across the structure are very inefficient in transferring ions from one region to another, leading to a small percentage of the ion current from the ion source making it into the inlet aperture and the majority of the ion current impacting on the lens and the inlet aperture.

(c) Surfaces, single layer and laminated, with large electrostatic potential differences across the surface are very efficient at collecting and focusing dispersive highly charged aerosols into beams with small cross-sections but the diverging fields

encountered at inlet apertures, due to large electrostatic difference between the surfaces and the inlet, can lead to the lose of ions.

(d) By operating high electrostatic field ion sources or spray chambers, such as electrospray and discharge sources, with cylindrical electrodes and needles, distal to the inlet aperture, the potentials of the lens required to focus the ions is larger than the potential of the ion source thereby operating the electrodes at potentials close to their discharge limit. In addition, the position of the sprayers or nebulizers is pre-set requiring re-optimization of the potentials every time the sprayer's original position is change.

(e) By the positioning lenses or diaphragms immediately in front of or behind the inlet aperture, most of the ion current from the sprayers ends up on the lens itself or on the entrance of the inlet aperture because these lens cannot overcome the dispersive electrical potentials of the sprayers or nebulizers.

(f) By positioning a single lens or perforated electrode between the ion source and the inlet aperture there is no way to dynamically shape or readjust the electrostatic filed lines in the focusing region between the lens and the inlet aperture.

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SUMMARY

In accordance with the present invention a laminated lens comprises alternate layers of conducting electrodes and insulating bases with upstream or entrance apertures of the lens being larger than the exit aperture, with an optional high transmission surface upstream of the laminated lens for the introduction of gas-phase ions or charged particles at or near atmospheric pressure into a mass spectrometer or ion mobility spectrometer. The voltages applied to elements are intended to provide a funnel-shaped potential surface of user definable initial and exit potential relative to other components in the ion source.

OBJECTS AND ADVANTAGES

Accordingly, besides the objects and advantages of the laminated and single layer high transmission surfaces described in our co-pending patents, several objects and advantages of the present invention are:

(a) to provide a laminated lens that can be easily incorporated into various atmospheric ion sources in order to shape the electric fields in front of an inlet aperture for the purpose of focusing ions into the inlet aperture of an atmospheric interface for a mass spectrometer;

(b) to provide a laminated lens and a high transmission surface that will establish a focusing region of converging electric fields in front of an inlet aperture that is not dominated by the electrostatic fields emanating from the ion source region but by the laminated lens and inlet aperture;

(c) to provide a laminated lens to focus a substantial proportion of ions from the ion source into the inlet aperture and into the vacuum system of a mass spectrometer without the need to enlarge the inlet aperture to get more ions into the vacuum system,

(d) to provide dynamic focusing or shaping of the electic fields between high transmission surface and the inl t aperture which can focus a substantial proportion of the ions into the inlet aperture,

(e) to provide a the operator a user controllable or tunable field ratio across single or laminate high transmission elements that results in improved transmission efficiency across high transmission elements into funnel-well regions,

(f) to provide a wider acceptance cross-section when sampling large volume sources that are being collected into the laminated lens,

(g) to provide improved compression in funnel-well optical systems as described in our copending patents Applications Ser. Nr 60/410,653 filed September 13, 2002; provisional Patent Applications Ser. Nr 60/210,877 filed June 9, 2000, now Patent Application Ser. Nr. 09/877,167 filed June 8, 2001; and provisional Patent Applications Ser. Nr 60/384,869 filed June 1, 2002, now Patent Application Ser. Nr. 10/499,147 filed May 31, 2003, and

(h) to reduce the well depth requirement for funnel-well optical devices which create problems with high voltage safety and isolation.

Further objectives and advantages are to provide a lens which can be easily and conveniently incorporated into existing atmospheric interfaces without the need for extensive or major reconstruction of the interface, which is simple to operate and inexpensive to manufacture, which can be used with highly dispersive or low electrostatic or electrodynamic field ion sources, and which obviates the need to have the sprayer's and or lens' placement or orientation preset. Still further objects and advantages will become apparent from a consideration of the ensuing descriptions and drawings.

DRAWING FIGURES

In the drawings, closely related figures have the same number but different alphabetic suffixes.

Figs 1A and 1B shows a cross-sectional illustration of a lens for introducing charged particles into the aperture of a (1A) planar lens, and (1B) a glass tube coated with a metal coating.

Fig 2 shows a similar lens configured with a laminated high-transmission element.

Fig 3 shows a similar lens configured with a laminated high-transmission element and an atmospheric pressure ionization source.

Fig 4 shows the laminated high-transmission element with slotted aperture openings: showing outer-laminated surface (4A) and inner-laminated surface (4B).

Fig 5 shows a lens as a cross-sectional illustration of the ion source region and laminated high-transmission element with the cylindrical lens as two separate elements.

Fig 6 shows a similar lens, ion source region, and a laminated high-transmission element, with the outer laminate as two separate surfaces.

Figs 7A to 7C show additional means of focusing ions into the ion-funnel region (7A) the inner-laminate of the laminated high-transmission element fabricated with additional electrodes; (7B) the cylindrical funnel wall electrically isolated from the laminated-lens and laminated high-transmission element; and (7C) a ring electrode.

Fig 8 shows a cone-shaped laminated lens adjacent to a laminated planar-shaped high-transmission element.

Fig 9 shows a hemispherical-shaped laminated-lens adjacent to a planar shaped high-transmission element.

Fig 10 shows a similar lens adjacent to a hemispheric-shaped laminated high-transmission element.

Fig 11 shows planar-shaped lens without an adjacent laminated high-transmission element, down stream of an atmospheric matrix assisted laser desorption ionization (AP-MALDI) source.

REFERENCE NUMERALS IN DRAWINGS

10 metal laminate or layers
20 base
30 laminate/base inner surface
40 largest aperture
50 smallest aperture
60 aperture
70 element
80 ion-collection region

90 deep-well focusing region
92 deep-well ring insulator
94 metal laminate
100 source
110 delivery means
120 ion-source
130 ion-source entrance wall
140 ion-source cylindrical wall
142 cylindrical electrode
144 shielding electrode
150 ring insulator
152 ring insulator
160 ion-source region
162 generalized ion trajectories
170 second ring insulator
172 ring insulator
200 concurrent gas source
202 concurrent gas inlet
204 countercurrent gas source
206 countercurrent gas inlet
208 exhaust destination
210 exhaust outlet
300 laminated high-transmission element
310 inner-electrode surface
320 outer-electrode surface
322 metal circular laminate
330 second insulating base
340 particle-stop
344 circular metal laminate
350 funnel-focusing electrode
352 circular electrode
360 laminated openings
400 funnel-focusing region
401 metal laminate
410 cylindrical funnel wall
412 ring insulator
414 ring insulator

DESCRIPTION - FIGS 1 THRU 4 — PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A preferred embodiment of the laminated-lens, funnel lens or just lens of the present invention is illustrated in Figs. 1A, 1B, and 2. The lens is made-up of a series of thin concentric circular planar metal laminates or layers **10** separated from each other by a thin circular base **20** of uniform cross section consisting of nonconducting insulating material, each metal laminate/base pair having an aperture, defined by a laminate/base inner surface **30**. In this series of metal laminates and insulating bases, each adjacent aperture has a smaller diameter than the previous aperture, the collection of the apertures thus forming a funnel shaped lens. The lens thus has an entry, corresponding with the largest aperture **40**, and an exit, corresponding with the smallest aperture **50** for introducing gas-phase ions or charged particles into a deep-well region **90** where they are accelerated toward an aperture **60** in the wall of an element **70**. The ions are transferred to an ion-collection region **80** through aperture **60**. Element **70** is isolated from the metal laminate **94** of the funnel lens by a deep-well ring insulator **92**. The deep-well focusing region **90** is bounded by metal laminate **94**, element **70**, and deep-well ring insulator **92**.

Aperture **60** has a diameter appropriate to restrict the flow of gas into region **80**. In the case of vacuum detection, such as mass spectrometry in region **80**, typical aperture diameters are 100 to 1000 micrometers. The collection region **80** in this embodiment is intended to be the vacuum system of a mass spectrometer (interface stages, optics, analyzer, detector) or other low-pressure ion and particle detectors.

In the preferred embodiment, the base **20** is glass. However the base can consist of any other material that can serve as a nonconductive insulator, such as nylon, Vespel, ceramic, various impregnated or laminated fibrous materials, etc. Alternatively, the base can consist of other nonconductive or dielectric material, such as ferrite, ceramics, etc. The metal laminates **10** are fabricated from a conducting and chemically inert material, such as stainless steel, brass, copper, aluminum, etc.

While element **70** can also be made of a conducting material, such as stainless steel, aluminum, etc, or a conductively coated insulating material, such as the glass tube.

Upstream of the lens is a funnel focusing region **400**, a laminated high transmission element **300**, and an ion-source region **160** of gas-phase ions or charged particles formed at or near atmospheric pressure. Sample from a source **100** is delivered to an ion-source **120** by a delivery means **110** through an ion-source entrance wall **130**. Wall **130** is electrically isolated from an ion-source cylindrical wall **140** by a ring insulator **150** while a second ring insulator **170** isolates cylindrical wall **140** from a laminated high-transmission element **300**. Sample from source **100** are gas-phase ions or charged particles or, alternatively, are neutral species which are ionized in the ion-source **120**. Ion-source region **160** is bounded by the wall **130**, the cylindrical wall **140**, and the laminated high-transmission element **300**.

The high-transmission element **300** consist of a second insulating base **330** laminated with an inner-electrode **310** and an outer-electrode **320** metal laminate. The surface of the laminated high transmission element has slotted shaped laminated openings **360** through which gas-phase ions are transmitted from the ion-source region **160** to the funnel-focusing region **400**. Funnel-focusing region **400** is bounded by a cylindrical funnel wall **410**, the inner-electrode surface **310** of the laminated high-transmission element **300**, and metal laminate **401** establishing the largest aperture **40** of the laminated lens. On the surface of the outer laminate **320** is a raised particle-stop **340**, which is axial symmetric with apertures **40**, **50**, **60**.

In the preferred embodiment, the second base **320** is also silica. However the base can consist of any other material that can serve as an electrical insulator, such as nylon, Vespel, ceramic, various impregnated or laminated fibrous materials, etc. The metal laminates **310**, **320** are fabricated from a conducting and ch mically inert material, such as stainless steel, brass, copper, aluminum, etc. Alternatively, the laminated element **300** may be manufactured by using the techniques of

microelectronics fabrication: photolithography for creating patterns, etching for removing material, and deposition for coating.

A DC potential is applied to each metal laminate, electrode, and element creating an electrical field, although a single power supply in conjunction with a resistor chain can also be used, to supply the desired and sufficient potential to each laminate, electrode, and element to create the desired net motion of ions, as shown by generalized ion trajectories **162**, from the ion source region **160** through the laminated openings of the high-transmission element **300** into the funnel-focusing region **400**, down the lens and exiting out through aperture **50**, through the deep-well focusing region **90**, through the aperture **60**, and into the ion-collection region **80**. Alternatively, in the case where the base of the lens is composed of dielectric material a single power supply can be used to supply the necessary potentials to the metal laminates of the lens.

Gas can be added for concurrent flow of gas from a concurrent gas source **200** introduced through a concurrent gas inlet **202**. In addition gas can be added for a countercurrent flow from a countercurrent gas source **204** through a countercurrent gas inlet **206**. Excess gas can be exhausted through an exhaust outlet **210** toward an exhaust destination **208**. All gas supplies are regulated and metered and of adequate purity to the meet the needs of the ion transmission application.

FIGS 5, 6, 7 — ADDITIONAL EMBODIMENTS

Additional embodiments of the lens are shown in Figs 5, 6, and 7. In Fig 5 the cylindrical lens **140** is shown as two separate electrode, a cylindrical electrode **142** and a shielding electrode **144** separated by a ring insulator **152**, and the shielding electrode **144** separated from the outer-laminate **320** by the ring insulator **170**; in Fig 6 the outer-laminate **320** is shown as two separate elements, circular metal laminates **322**, **344**, the circular metal laminate **322** populated with laminated openings **360** and the laminate **344** isolated from the shielding electrode **144** by the ring insulator **170**; in Fig 7A the inner-laminate **310** is fabricated with additional

electrodes, a ring electrode **352** and a funnel-focusing electrode **350**, which are axial-symmetric with apertures **40**, **50**, **60** and the particle-stop **340**; in Fig 7B the cylindrical-funnel wall **410** is isolated from the inner-laminate **310** by a ring insulator **412** and isolated from the metal laminate **401** by a ring insulator **414**; and in Fig 7C a ring electrode **354** is added to the ion-funnel region **400**.

FIGS 8 THRU 11 — ALTERNATIVE EMBOODIMENTS

There are various possibilities with regard to the make-up and geometry of the laminates of the lens and laminated high-transmission element.

Fig 8 shows a cross-sectional view of a lens composed of a cone-shaped array of metal laminates adjacent to a high-transmission element **300** with lamination on both sides.

Fig 9 shows a cross-sectional view of a lens composed of a hemispheric-shaped array of metal laminates adjacent to a planar-shaped high-transmission element **300** with lamination on one side only, with the base **10** partially removed, with particle stop **340**; and showing ion trajectories **162**.

Fig 10 shows a similar lens adjacent to a hemispherical-shaped high transmission element **300** with lamination on both sides.

Fig 11 shows a lens downstream of an AP-MALDI source **122,** including a laser **124** and a sample target **126**, without a laminated high-transmission lens sandwich between the two. The cylindrical electrode **140** separated from cylindrical funnel wall **410** by a ring insulator **172**.

ADVANTAGES

From the description above, a number of advantages of our laminated lens become evident:

(a) With the establishment of a low electrostatic field between the laminated high transmission surface and the laminated lens, one can shape the electrostatic field lines with a small potential apply to either the metallic layers of the laminated lens or

the underside of the laminated high-transmission surface, thus avoiding the need for larger potentials required in region where the electrostatic fields from high field ion sources dominate.

(b) With the establishment of a low electrostatic field between the high transmission surface and the laminated lens, electrostatic fields lines can be focused onto a small cross-sectional area at the inlet aperture, thus avoiding the need for larger inlet apertures used to get ions into the vacuum system of a mass spectrometer.

(c) The presence of a focusing element on the underside of the laminated high-transmission surface along with the individual laminates of the laminate lens will permit time-dependent adjustment of the electrostatic fields in front of the inlet aperture [control ion flow through aperture].

(d) The presence of a focusing element on the underside of the laminated high-transmission surface and the potentials of the individual laminates of the laminated lens will permit the time-dependent transmission of ions through the high-transmission surface [control ion flow through HTE].

OPERATION - FIGS 1 THRU 11

This device is intended for use in collection and focusing of ions or charged particles from a wide variety of atmospheric or near atmospheric sources; including, but not limited to electrospray, atmospheric pressure chemical ionization, photo-ionization, electron ionization, laser ionization (including matrix assisted), inductively coupled plasma, discharge ionization. Both gas-phase ions and charged particles emanating from ion-source region **120** are collected, focused, and introduced into the vacuum system of a mass spectrometer.

Ions and charged particles supplied or generated in the ion-source region **160** are attracted to the outer-electrode surface **320** of the laminated high-transmission element **300** by the DC electric potential difference between the ion-source **120** and the potential on outer-electrode surface **320**.

The ions moving toward the outer-electrode surface **320** and particle stop **340** are diverted away from the metal laminate surface through the laminated opening (as shown by generalized ion trajectories **162**) by the presence of the electric field penetrating through the base **330** from the inner-electrode surface **310** into the ion source region **160**. Making the laminated high-transmission element transparent to approximately all ions moving from the ion source **120** into region **400**.

To move ions, that have passed through the laminated high-transmission element into the ion-collection region **80**, lower DC electrical potentials are applied to the metal laminates **10** of the lens and the element **70** to cause ions to move into the larger aperture **40** and pass through the lens out through the smaller aperture **50**, through aperture **60** of element **70**, and into the ion-detection region **80**.

Gas flowing in a direction that is counter to the movement of ions will serve to reduce or eliminate contamination from particulate materials and neutral gases. Operation with a counter-flow of gas is accomplished by adding a sufficient flow of gas from the countercurrent gas source **204** flowing out through the ion funnel region **400**, through the laminated openings **360** and into the ion-source region **160**, to prevent contamination of the outer-surface **320** of the laminated high-transmission element **300**. In addition, lower mobility charged particles may also be swept away in the counter-flow of gas. Counter flow of gas is also a primary carrier of enthalpy required for evaporation of droplets.

Additional means of focusing ions can be used to focus ions into the lens by fabricating the inner-laminate of the high-transmission element **300** with additional electrodes and by placing electrodes in the ion-funnel region **400**.

As shown in Fig 7A thru 7C, additional electrodes with DC potentials different from the DC potentials of the inner-electrode surface **310** and metal laminate **401**, additional focusing can be imparted on the ions. By establishing the DC electrical potential of the funnel-focusing element **350** at a lower potential than the potentials of the inner-electrode **310** and metal laminate **410**, the field lines emanating out of the

ion-funnel will reach out further into the ion-funnel region **400** facilitating the movement of ions from the ion-funnel region **400** into the largest aperture **40**.

Therefore, ions exiting the laminated openings can be focused down into the lens avoiding possible collisions with the metal laminates **10**. Therefore, if the lens has additional focusing in the ion-funnel region **400** substantially all of the ions passing through the laminated high-transmission element **300** will be directed into the lens and be introduced into the ion-detection region **80**.

The lens can be used to collect and focus ions from low-field sources, such as an atmospheric matrix assisted laser desorption ionization (AP-MALDI) ion sources; one simply configures the lens without a high-transmission element, either laminated or not. As shown in Fig 11 when the lens is configured downstream of an AP-MALDI source, ions desorbed from the sample target **126** form a plasma of charged particles and matrix in the ion-source region **160**. The charged particles in region **160** move toward the entrance aperture of the lens by means of establishing the DC electrical potentials of the lens and element **70** at a lower potential than the sample target **126** and walls **130**, **140**, **410**. Thereby eliminating the need for a high-transmission element to shield the lens from the high fields of the ion source. In addition, the laser target **126** and walls can be at ground potential, eliminating the need for costly interlocks to protect the analyst from high voltages.

Figs 8, and 9 and 10; show cone-shaped and hemispherical-shaped metal laminates of the lens focusing ions into and through aperture **60** and into ion-collection region **80**, respectively.

CONCLUSION, RAMIFICATION, AND SCOPE

Accordingly, the reader will see that the laminated lens of this invention can be used to introduce ions into the vacuum system of a mass spectrometer and can be used with both high and low electrostatic field ion sources without considering the electrostatic fields in the ion source. In addition, when a laminate lens is used to introduce ions into an inlet aperture the potentials of the laminates of the laminated

lens and high-transmission surface can be optimized to shape the electrostatic field lines in front of the inlet aperture to be either converging or diverging. Furthermore, the laminated lens has the additional advantages in that:

- It provides a laminated lens which can be easily incorporated into existing high and low electrostatic field atmospheric or near atmospheric ion sources;

- It provides a laminated lens which can transfer substantially all gas phase ions from dispersive ion sources into the vacuum system of a mass spectrometer or into an ion mobility spectrometer; and

- It provides a time dependent switching of the focusing and defocusing of the ions as they pass through the high transmission surface into the low electrostatic fields upstream of the laminated lens.

Although the description above contains many specifications, these should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention but as merely providing illustrations of some of the presently preferred embodiments of this invention. For example the laminated lens can have other shapes, such as oval, square, triangular, etc.; laminated-openings can have other shapes; the number of laminates of the laminated high-transmission element can vary depending on the preferred use; the number of metal laminates of the lens can vary depending on the source of ions, the type of ion-collection region or a combination of both, etc.

Thus the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents, rather than by the examples given.